

Thank you for your courage and hard work. I stand with you in your efforts to enact federal reform while promoting and protecting the value the care delivered in Minnesota.

TESTIMONY OF REPRESENTATIVE MARIA RUUD

Good morning Rep. McCollum. Thank you for holding this hearing on federal health care reform. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today.

I have been a Nurse Practitioner for 21 years and am serving my third term in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Health care reform can only occur if we enact true payment reform. With the current system there is a disincentive to provide the care needed. Paying for more tests, more procedures, and more visits rewards waste and inefficiency. The focus needs to change from reimbursement based on volume to reimbursement based on outcome.

Part of the reason our health care system has been able to function for as long and as well as it has is because there are a number of individuals who are deeply committed to serving their patients well. But our current payment system is making it increasingly difficult to deliver effective care.

For example, pay for production—pay for the number of patients seen or procedures performed—drives costs up and is a disincentive to provide the appropriate care at the appropriate time.

We have evidence-based medicine to inform providers, about what the most effective option is for the patient to achieve a healthy outcome. Access to preventative care and screenings, early and consistent management of chronic health conditions.

It comes down to providing the incentives that will help us achieve the goals we seek—well-being and healthy outcomes.

Now is the time to be bold. To align the incentives with the outcomes we desire. Providers want to do it—it is their calling to provide the most effective care possible.

TESTIMONY OF SHANE DAVIS, SECRETARY-TREASURER, SEIU HEALTHCARE MINNESOTA

Good Morning Representative McCollum: At this critical moment, while Congress is deciding to pass quality affordable healthcare for all, I want to sincerely thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would also like to publicly acknowledge your good work in supporting the principles of healthcare reform, put forward by Health Care for America-Now, an important coalition SEIU is proud to support.

My name is Shane Davis; I am the Secretary-Treasurer of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota. We represent more than 17,000 healthcare workers around the state of Minnesota. Our Members, by the thousands, work every day and night for companies currently recognized nationally as models of high-quality, low-cost healthcare, such as Allina, HealthPartners, and the Mayo Clinic. The Minnesota recipe for high-quality, low-cost healthcare includes workers having a real voice on the job. This encourages labor and management to work in partnership; increasing productivity and putting patient care experiences and health outcomes first.

Those of us who bargain contracts have first-hand experience in how badly we need health care reform. The ability to bargain for higher wages, for training funds to upgrade the skills of our members, for higher pensions so that workers can look forward to a secure and dignified retirement has been deeply compromised by escalating health care costs. We've heard that the CEO of Starbucks complains that he spends more money buying health insurance for his employees than he does buying coffee beans.

Well, in our industry, as health care workers, it's not coffee bean prices that are outstripped by the cost of health insurance, it's training and upgrade funds, for instance, that would help our members move up career ladders, just so that we can hold on to health insurance.

Our members' stories about how badly they need health care reform are much like the stories of many other Minnesotans. Last month, Pam Bundy told us about her son, a former construction worker who was diagnosed with liver cancer. After months of illness and treatments, he lost his job, exhausted his COBRA benefits, maxed out his credit card with co-pays for treatment, was told he needed to pay cash when he came in for chemotherapy, and ultimately lost his home to foreclosure because of the crushing debt-load that was inevitable. Our members cannot wait for health care reform. Millions like Pam's son cannot wait for healthcare reform. We urge you to reject the siren song of delay and pass a bill.

SEIU believes that a public plan option is an essential and necessary component of real health care reform. It provides an alternative to private insurance and applies competitive pressure to the rest of the insurance industry. Research by the Commonwealth Fund shows that including the public option with other health care reform measures can help save another 77 billion to 1.8 trillion dollars over the next ten years. We are encouraged that a public plan has been included in health care reform legislation passed by the Senate HELP committee, the House Ways and Means committee, and the House Education and Labor committee. SEIU has strongly supported votes to approve these bills.

Once Congress has met the challenge of producing a final bill that includes a public plan option, then Congress has the opportunity to structure the best possible public plan. The deficiencies of our current payment system are well known. As the Dartmouth Atlas Project has highlighted, Medicare reimbursements currently reward high cost, low quality states, and penalize low cost, high quality states. For example, in Miami, Medicare will spend \$15,000 per patient per year, while here in Minnesota, that figure is \$7,000, less than half the reimbursement, with no difference in patient outcome. We must change how health care is paid for, so that we reward quality outcomes rather than quantity of services. If such changes are incorporated into a strong public plan option, it should reduce the overall cost to taxpayers and produce improved care across the nation. Our task is to make the most of this opportunity for payment reform, while still meeting the immediate challenge of passing real healthcare reform, including a public plan option.

Thank you very much for holding this hearing to ensure that Minnesota's voice is heard in this debate on health care reform.

IN RECOGNITION OF JIM HAMILTON

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I wish to recognize Jim Hamilton of Columbia, South Carolina, for his 46 years of service as airport manager of the Columbia Owens Downtown Airport.

Jim has been an active member of our community—participating in many diverse organi-

zations and working to educate the community on aviation, the dangers of drug abuse, and supporting efforts to transport children with disabilities and those suffering from severe burns to Shrine hospitals throughout the country. He has even volunteered his time as an emergency standby pilot for flights to transport transplant candidates and critically ill patients.

For 13 years, Jim has driven a bus each Wednesday morning to bring elderly individuals to shop for groceries and even successfully convinced some of his fellow citizens to contribute refreshments for the bus ride. On behalf of the Columbia Owens Downtown Airport, Jim has fought to secure funding for a reconstruction and redesign of the airport as well as safety upgrades.

In recognition of his tireless service to the community, Jim has been honored twice with the Order of the Palmetto by two separate governors—the state's highest civilian honor—as well as numerous other honors and awards.

I commend Jim Hamilton for his service to our community and his dedication to his fellow citizens.

HONORING THE REV. DR. C.T. VIVIAN OF ATLANTA

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 31, 2009

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor a warrior for civil rights and social justice, a veteran of the modern-day Civil Rights Movement, a resident of the 5th Congressional District, and a friend. In a few days, we in Georgia will be honoring the life of the Reverend Dr. Cordy Tindell Vivian, better known as C.T. Vivian, who will turn 85 years old on July 30, 2009.

Born in 1924, Vivian grew up in Macomb, Illinois and was raised by his mother and grandmother. Even though Illinois was not segregated by law, C.T. Vivian was keenly aware that the customs and traditions of racism and discrimination pervaded his life. As a young man Vivian wanted to find a way to make an impact on society, so after leaving college he began working with youth at Carver Community Center in Peoria, Illinois. As a young man deeply influenced by the church and the visionary faith of his grandmother and mother, Vivian recognized the power of non-violence as a tool for social change. He joined a successful non-violent movement in Peoria in 1947 to integrate restaurants in the city, which brought down barriers in all public eating establishments throughout the city.

In 1955, C.T. Vivian was called to the ministry and enrolled in what would some years later become my alma mater, American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee. That same year, he began working with a new subdivision of Martin Luther King Jr.'s organization established by the Rev. Kelly Miller Smith called the Nashville Christian Leadership Conference. The NCLC began training Nashville college students in the discipline and philosophy of non-violence and was involved in organizing the first student sit-ins and marches in the city in 1960.

Vivian's experiences in Peoria helped provide leadership for student organizers in Nashville, and in 1961, he joined the Freedom